



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Virginia receives \$7.9 million welfare bonus**

*-State ranks highest in region for TANF work participation -*

**Richmond** – The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has been awarded a \$7,914,259 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) High Performance Bonus for successfully placing welfare participants in jobs, and improving job retention and wage advancement.

This is the third consecutive year Virginia has been awarded a bonus.

“This award is a testimony to the level of commitment of our local departments of social services that are dedicated to help our neediest citizens improve their quality of life,” said VDSS Commissioner Maurice A. Jones. “We have built upon the initial success of welfare reform of finding jobs for citizens by helping them stay in their jobs and advance their careers.”

The award is part of \$200 million in TANF bonuses distributed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to 37 states and the District of Columbia.

The federal agency also reports that Virginia ranks highest in Federal Region III (Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia and West Virginia) for the number of TANF recipients working at least 30 hours per week.

“We are pleased that so many TANF recipients in Virginia are working very hard to achieve self-sufficiency,” said Jones. “It is not always an easy road back to self-sufficiency, but with the combination of strong workforce programs and commitment of our social services staff, TANF recipients are making real progress.”

Virginia’s welfare reform has been underway since 1995. The Commonwealth has been effective in moving many citizens receiving TANF into the competitive labor market and off welfare. Virginia’s efforts have led to a 50 percent reduction of TANF cases, from 70,797 families in June 1995, to 35,450 families in August 2004. Partnerships across the public and private sectors have been instrumental in this success.

To learn more about the Virginia Department of Social Services TANF program, visit <http://www.dss.state.va.us/benefit/tanf.html>.

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